

## MINUTES

**SELECTMEN'S MEETING  
TOWN HALL**

**Tuesday, February 21, 2023  
6:30 PM**

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### ATTENDEES:

Selectman Shane Beattie      Selectmen Troy Merner      Selectman Leon Rideout  
Town Manager Benjamin Gaetjens-Oleson      Charity Baker      Michael Nadeau  
Department Heads      Members of the Public      Phlume Media

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Selectman Shane Beattie.

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

### DEPARTMENT HEAD UPDATES:

Police Chief Tim Charbonneau mentioned David Walker is almost ½ way through the academy. He reports in with Tim every day. There is a huge increase of homeless people in town due to other communities bringing them here because of the hospital and/or the shelter.

Fire Chief Randy Flynn reported they had 144 patient contacts over the last month. 51 were 911 calls and 93 transfers. They also had 30 MIH contacts.

Librarian Barbara Robarts reported Kim Varney Chandler will be at the library for a program geared toward the covered bridges in Lancaster.

Recreation Director Eli Vincent mentioned the Safe Haven numbers are down a bit. Many of the kids aged out and they now have a lot of new young kids. He reported an update on the basketball season and mentioned Phlume Media broadcasted the most recent tournaments at Col. Town. The 5/6 tournaments' broadcasting was sponsored. The Father/Daughter Dance will be held March 19<sup>th</sup> and baseball sign ups will be going out soon.

### OLD BUSINESS:

- Review and approval of the February 6, 2023 regular and non-public meeting minutes.

**Motion made by Leon and seconded by Shane to approve both the February 6, 2023 regular and non-public meeting minutes. Troy abstained. Shane and Leon voted in favor. Motion carried.**

- Sign paperwork –
  - Ambulance and Fire contracts for other towns -
    - Guildhall fire coverage at a cost of \$4,000
    - Guildhall EMS contract – \$45 per capita for 261 people for a total of \$11,745.
    - Jefferson EMS contract – \$45 per capita for 1,107 people for a total of \$49,815.
    - Lunenburg EMS contract - \$45 per capita for 1,302 people for a total of \$58,590.

Randy reported the fee increased \$10 per capita from last year and there is one more year in the staggered increase plan, so next year all towns will be at \$55 per capita.

- Mt. Prospect Road update - Ben spoke with John Davidge and explained the concerns and John is happy to meet with Ben, Tim Brown and the Selectmen to discuss options that will

be most agreeable for all parties. John mentioned about 10 years ago he hired an engineer to create a plan to reconstruct the road to get a better line of site on the corner. Ben believes John is going to see if he can find the plans and then schedule a time to meet. Rob Christie wanted to express his concern with moving the road and the task it will be. He feels the hedge is definitely in the towns right of way and he thinks the board is being way more polite than is necessary. He realizes they don’t want it to become litigious. The board agreed, they are on the correct path with trying to work with the property owner.

- Covered Bridge update – Ben reported there were some delays starting off however they have been working hard to get the project done. All the accident damage is fixed. Ben filled the board in on the details of the project and believes the work should be done soon. He mentioned the money that is paying for the decking is from the Bridge Aid that was distributed in 2022.

Ben also mentioned that the last time the Mount Orne bridge was damaged some cross beams were not replaced when it was repaired and missing those cross braces has tweaked the bridge a bit. He had the company doing the work on the Mechanic Street bridge to take a look at it and they are going to straighten it up and put in the cross braces and replace the missing siding. Ben state we are on the 10-year plan for bridge aid for work on the Mount Orne bridge and he is working with the State bridge crew to identify suitable projects to do some extra work on that bridge. He mentioned the work is going to take about a week and as soon as he knows when that will take place, he will get the word out to the public.

- Libby house update – Ben reported the offer to purchase the house was not accepted by the family.
- Dump truck update – Burt Gilbert has expressed interested in bartering for service in the amount of \$3,000 in service for the ownership of the truck. The board discussed and they are ok with trading the truck for repair work with Burt Gilbert.

**Motion by Troy and seconded by Leon to trade \$3,000 in services with Burt Gilbert for the ownership of the dump truck. All in favor. Motion carried.**

**NEW BUSINESS:**

- Jude Gesel was present to ask the board if they would be willing to help him out with his outstanding taxes by waiving the interest and penalties. He believes that if they would help him out by waiving the interest, he would then be able to pay the principal amount by the end of the month. There was much discussion and the board agreed, they are not willing to waive the interest and penalties and set a precedence in doing so. Jude thanked the board for their time.
- Town Forest Stewardship plan – The Conservation Commission presented the board with the updated stewardship plan. Ben mentioned the plan outlines the roles and responsibilities between the Board of Selectmen, Town Manager and Conservation

Commission which the board received a draft at a previous meeting. This is the formal approval of that. The Commission also prepared a map with the sensitive areas of the Town Forest. Ben mentioned it would be a cooperative agreement between the Board of Selectmen, Town Manager and the Conservation Commission. The Town Forest is owned by the Town which is managed by the Selectboard. The Commission has become more active and there is interest in maximizing the forest’s potential and insuring that the natural resources in the property are well-maintained and taken care of. The stewardship plan basically outlines the roles and responsibilities between the parties and the ultimate decisions would be the Selectboard’s responsibility.

Rachel mentioned the parcel has a very high value for wildlife habitat, water quality and flood resilience and the Commission is just trying to strike a balance of protecting that and at the same time improving access. She mentioned they are working on fixing up the Heritage Trail and rerouting it off private property. They have also spoken to the snowmobile club about rerouting corridor 5 out of the most sensitive spots and not fight with the beaver dam.

Rob Christie mentioned he feels it is a great idea. He suggests they have the Town’s attorney take a look at the agreement/plan because he believes with the law changes over the years the management of Town Forests falls under the Conservation Commission. Rachel mentioned they set up a chart of collaboration not necessarily a plan of management. Shane stated he is good with the direction that the Commission and the Board are going.

**Motion made by Troy and seconded by Leon to approve the Stewardship plan presented by the Conservation Commission for the Town Forest. All in favor. Motion carried.**

- 250 Summer & 600 Main Streets – Ben, Chief Charbonneau and Chief Flynn met with State entities regarding the two properties. There are heavy State and environmental violations and they wanted to meet to discuss any local violations there may be and what the Town’s plan is to address them. There was a lot of discussion regarding the history of the two properties. The State recommended speaking with the Town’s attorney which they did and Attorney Frizzell recommended the Town start investigating any local violations on those properties and start addressing them if any are found. Attorney Frizzell felt it was best to keep the board in the loop on the progress with those properties. If there are any letters of violations that need to be issued, they will be made aware. Leon mentioned one of the biggest concerns he knows about is homeless people using 250 Summer Street as a place to reside. Ben said, it was a good meeting with the State and they are appreciative of the Town doing anything we can.
- Reappoint Charity Baker as Tax Collector.

**Motion made by Leon and seconded by Troy to reappoint Charity Baker as Tax Collector. All in favor. Motion carried.**

- Appoint Robin Irving as Code Enforcement Officer. Ben is also appointed as Code Enforcement Officer and they will work together on any code enforcement issues.

**Motion made by Leon and seconded by Troy to appoint Robin Irving as Code Enforcement Officer. All in favor. Motion carried.**

Ben mentioned, a State law passed few years ago concerning community power and allowing a municipality to act as a supplier. The town would buy electricity and distribute it out to residents that sign up for it. It’s a way to leverage mass in order to get a good price. He was contact by Standard Power to discuss their role in working with communities to allow the municipality to participate in this program. They have offered to come up to meet with the Selectboard and go over the steps it takes for the municipality participate. It is his understanding that it does not cost the Town any money and he thinks it would be good to hear from them to see what they have to offer. He will schedule a time for them to come meet the board.

**INFORMATION:**

- Land Use Permits –
  - Leon Rideout/Leo Rideout, Jr., 36 Causeway Street – Construct a 20-unit, one-story, stick-built, 30’X100’ unheated self-storage facility on a concrete slab with no water, sewer, or electrical utilities, situated on a dead-end street.

**Motion by Leon and seconded by Troy to adjourn. All in favor. Motion carried.**

Respectfully submitted, Board of Selectmen Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Charity M. Baker

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Shane Beattie

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Troy Merner

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Leon Rideout